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07/19/06 BdMtg Item 5
Big River/Salmon Creek
Deadline: 7/14/06 @ 5pm

Ms. Tam M. Doduc
Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: SRF Loan Number C-06-6090-110/Big River and Salmon Creek Conservation Project

Dear Ms. Doduc:

I understand that on July 19th the State Water Board will consider a State Revolving Fund loan to The Conservation Fund to assist with the purchase of approximately 16,400 acres of forestland in the Big River and Salmon Creek watersheds in Mendocino County. I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for this innovative and efficient use of the Revolving Fund to protect coastal forests and address important water quality and other beneficial uses on the North Coast.

This exciting project will combine SRF loan funds with grants from public agencies and private foundations to achieve important water quality protection and enhancement goals identified in a number of State plans and policies relating to water quality, including the Board's Nonpoint Source Program Strategy and Implementation Plan, 1998 – 2013, and Department of Fish and Game's Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon.

Water quality protection and enhancement objectives will be achieved by permanently protecting this land from subdivision and conversion to non-forest uses and by implementing sustainable forest practices and silvicultural management measures identified in the Implementation Plan. Successful implementation of these measures will also achieve important state objectives related to recovery of coho salmon and steelhead trout.

The coastal forests of Mendocino County provide a wide array of irreplaceable benefits for all Californians. By funding the proposed Big River/Salmon Creek purchase, the Water Board can play a leading role in securing a sustainable future for the coastal forests of Mendocino County. I strongly endorse approval of the proposed loan to fund the acquisition of the Big River and Salmon Creek properties.

Thank you very much,

Wendy Millet,
North Coast Ecoregional Director
The Nature Conservancy